

Statement on Hate Crimes Legislation *October 12, 2000*

Today marks 2 years since young Matthew Shepard was beaten unconscious, tied to a fence, and left to die. At the time of Matthew's death, I expressed my sympathy for the family and my outrage about the heinous nature of the crime. Since then, Matthew's death has been a call to action to many across the country committed to doing more to prevent and prosecute hate crimes. Many have worked tirelessly, along with my administration, to pass meaningful hate crimes legislation this year. Their efforts led to two strong bipartisan votes—one in the House and one in the Senate—in favor of hate crimes

legislation. Unfortunately, just last week, the Republican leadership—denying the will of a bipartisan majority in both the House and the Senate—stripped hate crimes legislation from the Department of Defense Authorization bill. This action is wrong, and the will of the majority should be respected. We must not let the fear of people different from ourselves prevent this legislation from passing. Working with the bipartisan coalition that supports hate crimes legislation, I will continue to fight to make sure this important work gets done.

Statement on Senate Action on Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Legislation *October 12, 2000*

I am pleased that the Senate has passed a VA/HUD bill that will open the doors of opportunity in America for those who need it most, build on our agenda for national energy security, and strengthen our commitment to the environment. With this legislation—which includes key provisions negotiated by my budget team—we take an important step toward addressing critical national priorities and opening the doors of opportunity for many more Americans.

This legislation builds upon my opportunity agenda with increased funding for economic development through empowerment zones and enterprise communities and community development financial institutions, all part of my new markets initiative, and with 79,000 new housing vouchers for low income families. This agreement also increases support for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's emergency food and shelter programs which work with States and communities to help the homeless and hungry. We are also strengthening our commitment to national service with additional support for the Corporation for National and Community Service, the first increase since the inception of this critical volunteer agency in 1993.

With this legislation, we support the significant expansion of cutting-edge basic scientific research at the National Science Foundation. This includes research in nanotechnology—the manipulation of matter at the molecular and atomic level—which holds the promise of scientific breakthroughs in a wide range of fields. It also advances scientific research through support for space exploration at NASA. At especially at this time of elevated fuel prices, I am also pleased that this bill provides resources for technologies to increase fuel efficiency, an essential part of our long-term strategy to reduce dependence on oil.

This agreement also contains increased funding for enforcement of the Nation's environmental laws and for the cleanup of polluted waterways. The agreement we reached drops or fixes several objectionable riders that threatened to harm our environment. Yet, while we were able to ameliorate the impact of the remaining riders, we were not able to rid this bill entirely of objectionable provisions, in particular the rider relating to ozone.

This agreement also provides the additional \$1.5 billion I requested for the Department of